

Fair pay

for council
and school workers

UNISON
the public service union

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

By email

26 July 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Local government workers have been offered a 1.5% pay increase. With inflation standing at 3.9%, this amounts to a pay cut.

Our local government workers keep communities safe, children educated and our most vulnerable cared for. Just like our NHS workers, people working in councils, schools and in the community, have put themselves in harm's way to fight COVID-19 and to keep essential services going. They went to work, so that others could stay home.

They are not well-paid. Sixteen percent don't even earn £10 an hour, while 25% has been wiped from the value of their pay since 2010. Most – three-quarters - are women. Low-paid women have been the backbone of our country throughout the pandemic. So it is indefensible that they should now be offered a real terms pay cut.

While the pandemic has led to massive increases in local government expenditure and loss of income, and with shortfalls in council bank balances, all eyes are on you, as the Prime Minister, because fair pay must be funded via central government.

Local government workers should be getting a fair pay rise. Not only because they deserve it, but because local vital services are only resilient with a valued and fairly rewarded workforce.

Plus, extra money in the pockets of care workers, school caterers, cleaners, refuse collectors, housing officers, crematorium workers and all their local government colleagues would be spent on every local high street. Not to mention increased tax revenue and reduced expenditure on benefits from the public purse.

Tomorrow (Tuesday 27th July), local government employers will meet with trade unions representing our hundreds of thousands of council and school workers. Prime Minister, will you ensure the money is made available to fund fair pay for the people that you, I, and the whole country have relied on?

Yours sincerely,



Christina McAnea
UNISON general secretary